VANCOUVER metro®

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Style forecast this Christmas? The uglier the better

The ugly holiday sweater craze shows no signs of letting up around town PAGE 4

Shelter operators try to reassure outraged residents

Fear and misinformation are driving opposition to the Ramada housing plan, says an official PAGE 6

Where are they now, feline edition

Momo the cat captured the heart of the world by paw-dling to safety during the Alberta floods, but he's been keeping it pretty low-pro since, his human says PAGE 13

SLE-EP IN HEAV-ENLY ... PEAS?

DECODING OFT-MISUNDERSTOOD CHRISTMAS CAROL LYRICS PAGE 21

FINAL GOODBYE FOR MANDELA

A young boy watches the funeral of Nelson Mandela on big screens installed in front of the Cape Town City Hall in South Africa on Sunday. Story and photos, pages 8 and 9. NARDUS ENGELBRECHT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Father, son killed in plane crash

Vancouver Island. Albertans were bound for Tofino airport when they went down: Data

An Alberta father and his adult son on their way to meet friends were identified Sunday as the victims of a fatal plane crash on Vancouver Island, just minutes from their destination.

The men were found in the wreckage of the small aircraft that went down near Tofino.

A friend identified the men as Jurrie Van Den Berg, 51, and his son Mike, 25, from the town of Picture Butte, just outside of Lethbridge, Alta. Mike was an avid pilot, said Craig Sosick.

They were "both very good guys, hardworking, dedicated, all-around very good businessmen," Sosick said.

The men were found at the crash scene of the twin-engine Cessna 421 B on an uninhabited island five kilometres west of Tofino.

Cpl. Ray Jacobson of the Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre said Mike Van Den Berg was piloting the aircraft at the time, while his father was a passenger on the plane.

The aircraft was privately registered, said Glenn Friesen of the Transportation Safety Board.

Cpl. Frank Flock said it's believed the plane went down Saturday afternoon, when it disappeared off radar around Vargas Island.

The aircraft was found in a boggy area surrounded by a large crater, prompting investigators to believe there was a high-speed impact and an explosion.

The Transportation Safety Board is investigating the crash. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Renovated Vancouver fire hall to include social housing

Fire Hall No. 5. City, YWCA partnering to construct 31 units for low-income single mothers

EMILY JACKSON
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Alarm clocks might not be necessary for those moving into Vancouver's latest affordable housing project.

When the city rebuilds Fire Hall No. 5, it plans to partner with the YWCA to construct 31 units for low-income single mothers on top of the new structure.

Since the fire hall at East 54 Avenue and Kerr Street, built in 1952, needed to be replaced, the city figured it could creatively tackle its affordable housing goals at the same time.

"The city is dedicated to looking at every possible option for getting new affordable housing built," Mayor Gregor Robertson said in a statement.

"This new housing will provide safe, affordable homes for mothers and their children, and at the same time create a new community hub by combining it with a new fire hall for the neighbourhood."

If council approves the project on Wednesday, the wood-frame two and three-bedroom apartments will rent for between $500 and $980. The project is expected to be complete in 2015.

The city will budget $5.5 million for the housing in addition to the $10.13 million originally dedicated to the project. The YWCA will contribute $2.2 million, with an extra $1.3 million needed from yet-to-be-determined funders.

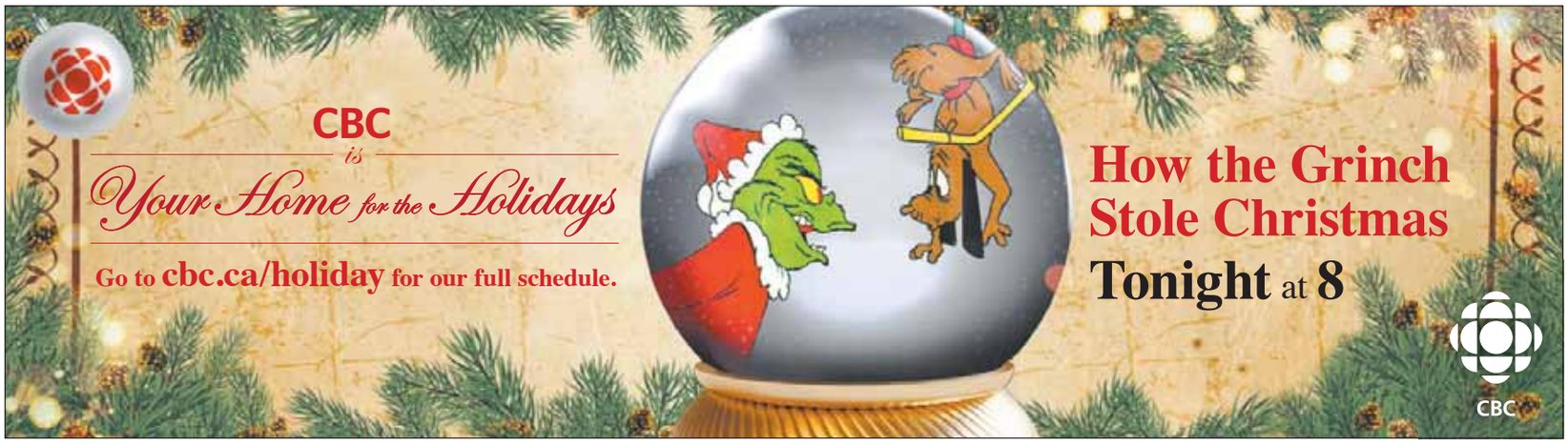
These units will be more expensive to build than typical non-market housing because they are larger, to accommodate families, and the fire hall must be strengthened to support four storeys of housing, according to a city report asking for the extra cash.

But the city says it will be worth it, as the southeast Vancouver location is close to transit, a community centre, a mall and an elementary school.

This isn't the first fire hall to double up with another community facility. Fire Hall No. 4 is home to a library.

Santas ski for free

Santas hit the slopes at Whistler Blackcomb on Saturday for the resort's annual "dress like Santa and ski for free" day. The first 75 people to show up at the base clad in Mrs. Claus or Santa attire — a red hat is mandatory, of course — were awarded free lift tickets. COURTESY OF WHISTLER BLACKCOMB/MICHAEL OVERBECK PHOTOGRAPHY



The good, the bad and the woolly

Ugly Sweaty.
Vancouverites get wrapped up in a tacky Christmas tradition

MATT KIELTYKA
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Ugly is so hot right now.

So hot, in fact, that K.C. Solano and Adrienne Gardner were almost caught out by the ugly-Christmas-sweater craze.

"Value Villages have been stripped … stripped of everything," said Solano. "I thought I could go through my mom's closet because I distinctly remember some questionable sweater choices in my youth, but that's gone now, too."

So when it came time to go ugly or go home, Gardner sprang into action.

"I decided to take some plain red sweaters and grab some decorations and some things that were lying around the house and pin them up," she said.

The result — one sweater with gift ribbons tacked on and another with ornaments strung up with gold rope — was uglier than they could have imaged.

And at the Ugliest Christmas Carol Singalong on Sunday, ugly was a good thing.

"It's like troll dolls or bulldogs, where it's so ugly that it cycles back around to awesome," said Solano. "We're in an era of Pinterest perfection and it's nice to have something really gawdy and it doesn't matter."

"There's just something fun and festive and silly about it," added Gardner.

Brothers Jason and Jordan Birch know all about that.

They've turned ugly Christmas sweaters into a full-blown charitable enterprise through the Official Ugly Christmas Sweater Party on Dec. 20 at the Commodore Ballroom, their ugly Christmas sweater button campaign and last month's Ugly Sweater Run in Coquitlam — all in support of the Children's Wish Foundation.

"It's fun and festive and an excuse to dress ugly and do good," said Jason

Street performer Spandy Andy, right, and Charmain Lardner sing along at the Ugliest Christmas Carol Singalong at the Vancouver Christmas Market on Sunday. MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

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Susan Tatoosh, executive director of the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society (AFCS), and AFCS shelter supervisor Harold Michell have chosen 40 residents they think are ready to graduate into interim housing. KATE WEBB/METRO

Ramada housing debate led by fear, says AFCS

East Vancouver.
Coun. Jang says concerns by the opposition were 'incredibly dehumanizing'

KATE WEBB
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All hell broke loose at a public information session in East Vancouver last week after residents learned that the city wants to move 40 people from a shelter near Main Street into interim housing in an old hotel near a school.

But the shelter operator says their concerns are based on unfounded fear and misinformation.

Susan Tatoosh, executive director of the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society shelter, went through a selection process to determine which of the 100 shelter residents would be first in line to graduate to a private room at the old Ramada.

The city's plan is to get them off the thin black floor mats at the shelter and into private rooms with beds while they await permanent housing that is expected to be complete by next fall. That will also free up more space at the shelter at 201 Central St., by clearing out those who have been there longest.

"What we did was we looked at the neediest, so that's our seniors, and then we looked at the fact that there are people with medical conditions," she explained on Friday. "Whether it's mobility, whether it's arthritic conditions or other medical conditions."

Most people who would be moving into the hotel at 3475 East Hastings St., which the city bought a couple of months ago for $7.3 million, have been staying at and following the shelter's code of conduct for at least six months, she added.

"These people have developed a routine and they have managed to keep their life in order so that they can stay here at the shelter without being asked to leave, and how that comes about is that we have a strong no-alcohol-or-drugs policy, and we have zero tolerance for violence," said Tatoosh.

About 150 concerned citizens showed up to Wednesday night's meeting, several of them shouting in Cantonese and pumping their fists.

Coun. Kerry Jang, who speaks Cantonese, was called in to try to calm them down, but said on Friday some of their concerns were "incredibly dehumanizing."

"It has bothered me since that meeting, the level of dehumanization I saw from some of the residents," Jang said, noting some suggested the Ramada was too nice for the incoming residents, or worse, that they were pedophiles and drug dealers, and should stay in warehouses on the floor.

Quoted

"Can I say that people aren't going to drink or aren't going to fall off the wagon, if you will? I can't."
Susan Tatoosh, executive director of the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society

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Nelson Mandela laid to rest

Solemnity and joy. Several thousand gather to take part in ceremonies for beloved former president and anti-apartheid hero

Nelson Mandela was buried in his home village on Sunday after a funeral that mixed ancient tribal rituals with a display of the might of the new, integrated South Africa.

Military officers rolled Mandela's flag-draped coffin to the family burial plot in the village of Qunu as formations of planes and military helicopters flew over the hills where thousands of mourners had gathered.

Unlike the public memorial on Tuesday at a stadium that was rife with problems, the funeral and burial went smoothly. The ceremonies mixed solemnity with joy at Mandela's accomplishments, lasted all morning and into the afternoon and were fit for African royalty.

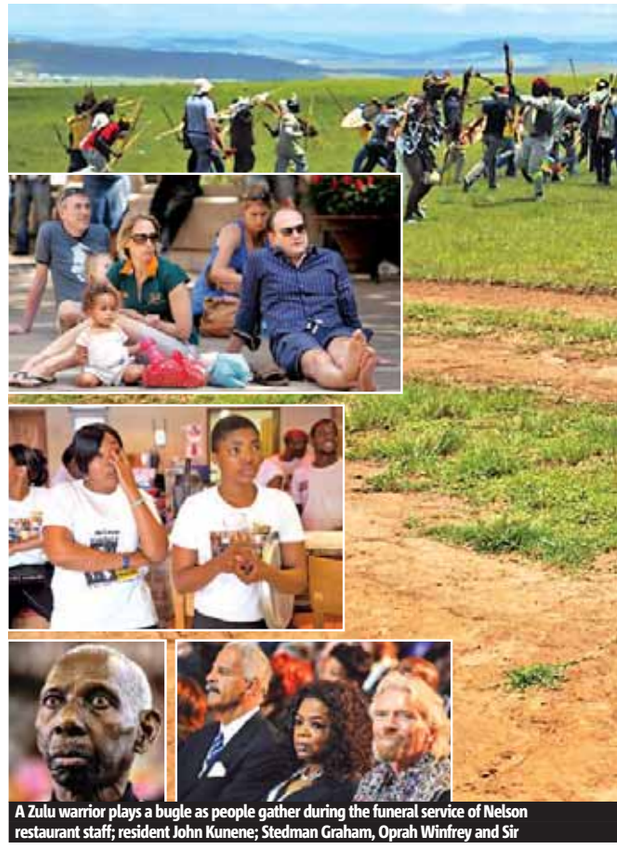
Several thousand gathered in a huge white tent at the Mandela family compound for the state funeral that preceded a private service at the gravesite. Songs, speeches and the boom of artillery rang across the fields.

Mandela, who spent 27 years in jail as a prisoner of the racist white government and emerged to lead a transition to a multiracial democracy, died on Dec. 5 at the age of 95 after a long illness.

His portrait looked over the assembly in the tent from behind a bank of 95 candles representing each year of his remarkable life. His casket, transported to the tent on a gun carriage, rested on a carpet of cow skins below a lectern where speakers delivered eulogies.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mandela's widow, Graca Machel, wipes her eyes during the service.
ODD ANDERSEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



A Zulu warrior plays a bugle as people gather during the funeral service of Nelson Mandela; restaurant staff; resident John Kunene; Stedman Graham, Oprah Winfrey and Sir

Xhosa

Tribal rituals on display in Qunu

Nelson Mandela's casket was draped in a lion skin, an ox was ritually slaughtered and a family elder kept talking to the body's spirit: The state funeral for Nelson Mandela on Sunday included these rituals from the tradition of the Xhosa tribe, to whom Mandela's Thembu clan belongs.

Mandela's coffin was wrapped in the South African flag, standing atop animal skins during the funeral in Mandela's southeastern childhood village of Qunu. The ceremony was an eclectic mix of traditional rituals, Christian elements and the military honours of a state funeral.

His body was buried around noon, "when the sun is at its highest and the shadow at its shortest," Cyril Ramaphosa, deputy leader of the African National Congress, said during the ceremony.

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Mandela in Qunu, South Africa, Sunday. Insets: Around South Africa, people stopped to watch the funeral. From top left, people in Nelson Mandela Square; Vilakazi Richard Branson; a girl at Orlando Stadium; Prince Charles speaking with Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. ANTOINE DE RAS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS; INSETS: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nelson Mandela's casket is taken out of the makeshift dome where his funeral service was held in Qunu, South Africa, Sunday. ODD ANDERSEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

'A great tree has fallen'

In contrast to the military pomp, some speakers evoked the traditions of the Xhosa tribe, to which Mandela's Thembu clan belongs.

- "A great tree has fallen, he is now going home to rest with his forefathers," said Chief Ngangomhlaba Matanzima, a representative of Mandela's family.
- Another speaker, Zolani Mkiva, served for many years as Mandela's praise singer, a traditional role. "The bones of our ancestors are vibrating. The waves of African oceans are reverberating," he said.

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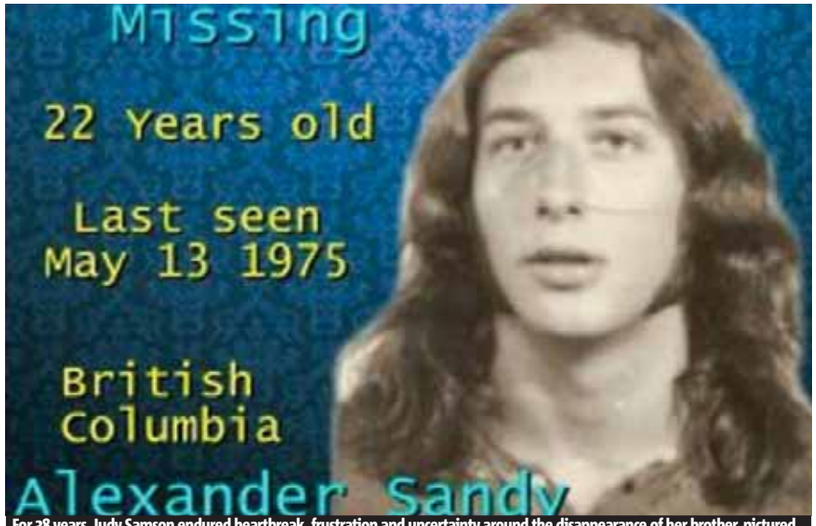

For 38 years, Judy Samson endured heartbreak, frustration and uncertainty around the disappearance of her brother, pictured here. RCMP broke the news to her last week that the body of 22-year-old Alexander "Sandy" Gammie had been found in Vancouver in 1975 — the same year he went missing. CONTRIBUTED/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cold case of 38 years solved

1975. Sister of missing man advises families to never give up

For 38 years, Judy Samson endured heartbreak, frustration and uncertainty around the disappearance of her brother.

She never stopped looking, even when she was on vacation in Hawaii and went to the police department to see if Sandy had returned to the state.

RCMP in Kamloops broke the news to her last week that the body of 22-year-old Alexander "Sandy" Gammie had been found in Vancouver in 1975 — the same year he went missing.

Samson had reported him missing in Kamloops, but the link wasn't made until decades later when a Vancouver cop assigned to historical files made a connection. A special unit within the B.C. Coroners Service took over the case and, with Gammie's dental records, a match was made.

"I kind of hoped we'd find him alive," Samson said, adding she was shocked when RCMP informed her of the link.

She reported him missing in May 1975, and while there wasn't much interest from police, she was tenacious.

"It was not fun," she said. "It happens over a long time. You don't think that much about it, but you look back and you think, 'Gee, I've wasted all that time doing this work and trying to figure out.'"

"I even went to a psychic to see if he could help me."

Samson, now 71, said she had no idea that police departments didn't communicate with each another about missing people, and if it weren't for the coroner's Identification and Disaster Response Unit, she may never have known what happened to Gammie.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Outstanding warrants

Transit police arrest 92 in blitz

Metro Vancouver Transit Police say they arrested 92 people on outstanding warrants during a November enforcement blitz. Project OWE saw officers search for people wanted on outstanding warrants or in breach of court conditions. Police arrested 81 men and 11 women on a total of 126 warrants and breaches. In one case, police say they were called to deal with a man causing a disturbance. He was wanted for assault, had 29 criminal convictions in the past two decades and was a registered sex offender. METRO

Evictions. Vancouver park board awaits community-centre verdict

The fate of six community centre associations is in the hands of a judge.

After five days of legal arguments in the B.C. Supreme Court ended Friday, a judge is determining whether the Vancouver park board can evict the associations from the facilities in which they've operated for years.

The park board says it can no longer work with the associations since they won't come to the negotiation table for a new operating agreement.

On the other hand, the associations say the park board imposed new conditions on them despite a lack of transparency in how the changes will be funded.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO

Reasoning

According to the park board, an updated contract is needed to ensure all facilities operate with the same standards and have equal access.

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It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas

Men dressed as Santa Claus use the washroom at a bar during a SantaCon event in Vancouver on Saturday. Hundreds of people dressed as Santa took part in the annual event to show Christmas spirit and have fun. SantaCon is held in more than 300 locations in 44 countries, according to organizers. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Shining the light on a potential mining labour crunch in B.C.

Solutions sought.
Temporary worker debate underscores predictions of mining labour woes

Glen Paul still remembers his first week on the job at a copper-gold mine in B.C.'s Interior — a position, he says, he landed three years ago as a "fluke" after taking a course to operate heavy machinery.

Paul says he didn't start his training with a specific plan to end up in the mining industry, but there he was at the New Afton project near Kamloops, which at the time was still two years away from full production.

By his second day, he was standing underground for an orientation of the mine site.

"It was slightly overwhelming because I've never been to a mine before, I've never seen one," says Paul, 24, who grew up on the Kamloops Indian Band reserve and was connected to the job through the B.C. Aboriginal Mine Training Association.

Three years later, Paul is still at the mine, owned by New Gold Inc., where he now works as a technician lubricating and servicing equipment. He has completed a pre-apprenticeship course and is waiting for a heavy-duty mechanic apprenticeship to open up.

In many ways, Paul is a rare commodity: a young worker entering an industry that observers warn is on the verge of a critical shortage of skilled labour, with some estimates predicting B.C. alone will need more than 10,000 workers during the next 10 years. Across the country, the shortfall of workers could be more than 100,000 as older miners retire and new mines begin production.

In those numbers, Paul sees opportunity — for high pay, good benefits and a chance to work close to home.

"There's lots of room to grow," he says. "If I get my apprenticeship, that would be awesome."

The dire predictions of a skilled-labour shortage in the mining industry became intertwined during the past year with a controversy in B.C. over the use of temporary foreign workers.

A Chinese mining firm's plans to bring 201 Chinese miners to a project in the northern part of the province drew ire from across the political spectrum and prompted two unions to launch a legal challenge, which ultimately ended in the company's favour in May.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Long-term goals

- Ryan Montpellier, executive director of the human-resources council, said the industry and governments must ensure they have a long-term vision for attracting and retaining workers from a broad spectrum of society. His group said immigrants, aboriginals and women are underrepresented in the industry, and programs to recruit and train them will be essential to fill the projected gap.
- He acknowledged some companies may turn to temporary foreign workers to fill short-term positions but said that the industry recognizes the importance of hiring permanent workers — either Canadians or permanent immigrants — who he said are less expensive and more sustainable in the long term.

Nova Scotia in the slush

Don those wellies.
Halifax sees pre-Christmas snow for first time in 3 years

HALEY RYAN
Metro in Halifax

Near-blizzard conditions didn't stop Julie Wiseman, left, Anna Marie Kaiser and Tabitha Bainbridge from getting in a 10-kilometre run along the St. Margaret's Bay trail Sunday morning in Halifax. JEFF HARPER/METRO IN HALIFAX

The combination of snow and rain on Sunday had many people in the East Coast shovelling their driveways so they wouldn't be stuck Monday morning.

Karen Ramsland of Halifax cleared her driveway around 1 p.m. so the snow wouldn't be too heavy to lift once the rain started.

"I'm loving it. I'm actually one of those people that likes the snow," Ramsland said.

Environment Canada meteorologist Jean-Marc Couturier said the Halifax region got about 15 centimetres of snow by mid-afternoon, then ice pellets and rain began turning the snow into slush by 3 p.m. onwards.

"There is a lot of melting that goes on," Couturier said of warmer temperatures Sunday afternoon.

Couturier said Sunday's storm was "not unusual" for Nova Scotia, and some areas saw up to 30 centimetres, but it's been three years since the area saw much snow before Christmas.

Chrissie Atherton moved to Halifax from the United Kingdom this year, and said Sunday's snowfall was her first in Canada.

"It's quite nice. I suppose if it was a weekday it would be a bit chaotic, so it's fun today," Atherton said as she shoveled her driveway.

Sgt. Gavin Nash of the Nova Scotia RCMP said they'd had reports of multiple cars sliding off the road throughout the province, but there were no serious accidents as of the early evening.

Halifax Regional Police responded to 10 reports of accidents in the urban area, but no injuries were reported and cars suffered minor damage.

Stormy weather

The same storm system dumped 15 to 25 centimetres of snow in parts of southern Ontario on Saturday.

- The storm then made its way to southern Quebec late Saturday and into Sunday, dumping up to 30 centimetres of snow in some areas.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Flood-hopping feline kicks back

Momo the cat has been living a quiet life since gaining global celebrity status when he leapt from a submerged pickup truck and swam for his life in floodwaters that hit southern Alberta last June.

Momo and his human, Kevan Yeats, were in Yeats's truck on a partially submerged street in High River when disaster struck. Yeats had been at work when the flooding started and he went back to his apartment to pick up Momo.

The truck hit a deep spot on the road and was quickly swamped by water washing through the community from the Highwood River.

Yeats smashed out the back window of the cab and hopped into the truck bed with the then-eight-month-old cat in his arms.

Momo jumped from Yeats's arms into the water and started paw-paddling to safety, his tiny wet head poking just above the surface.

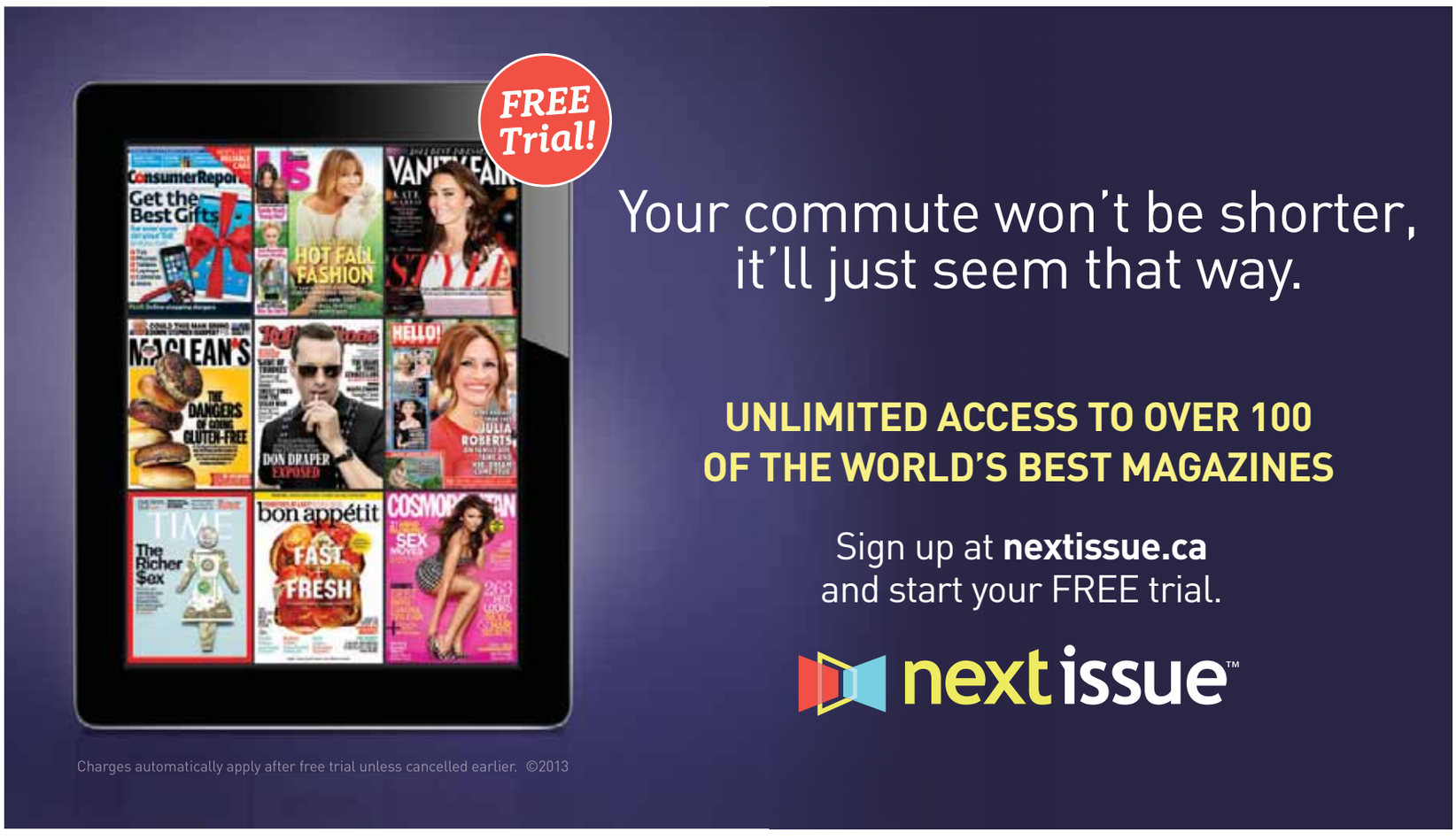
The moment was captured by a photographer with The Canadian Press and the images garnered international media attention as a symbol of hope amidst the devastating flooding.

Kevan Yeats spends some one-on-one time with his cat, Momo.
BILL GRAVELAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Yeats said Momo didn't seem to suffer any trauma from his swim.

"The next day he was fine and jumped in the shower — same old cat."

THE CANADIAN PRESS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Ukraine activists press demands

Four weeks strong. Protests have grown in size, intensity after two violent police dispersals

About 200,000 anti-government protesters converged on the central square of Ukraine's capital Sunday in a dramatic show of morale after nearly four weeks of daily protests, but the rally was shadowed by suggestions that their goal of closer ties with Europe may be imperilled.

A much smaller demonstration of government supporters, about 15,000, was taking place about a kilometre away from Kyiv's Independence Square. Anti-government protesters have set up an extensive tent camp there and erected barricades of snow hardened with freezing water and studded with scrap wood and junk.

U.S. senators John McCain and Chris Murphy joined the anti-government demonstration to express support for them and their European ambitions, threatening sanctions against the government of President Viktor Yanukovych if authorities use more violence to disperse the protests.

The protests began Nov. 21 after Yanukovych announced he was backing away from signing a long-awaited agreement to deepen trade and political ties with the EU and instead focus on Russia.

In the face of the protests, Ukrainian officials this week renewed talks with the EU and promised that they would sign the deal once some issues are worked out. However, EU official Stefan Fuele cast doubt on the prospect Sunday, saying on his Twitter account that work is "on hold." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

About 200,000 activists gather on Sunday in Kyiv around posters of jailed former Ukrainian prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko. SERGEI GRITS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

India. Activists protest recriminalizing of gay sex

Hundreds of gay-rights activists gathered in India's capital and other cities across the country on Sunday to protest a decision by India's top court to uphold a law that criminalizes gay sex.

India's Supreme Court last week reversed a landmark 2009 lower court order that had decriminalized gay sex. The country's gay community is demanding the government take immediate action to remove the colonial-era law.

About 800 protesters in New Delhi wore black arm bands and waved rainbow-coloured flags and banners. Some people wore masks and wigs to protect their identity.

An activist protests the criminalization of homosexuality. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The law makes gay sex punishable by up to a decade in prison. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sweden

28 detained after neo-Nazi attack on demonstration

Swedish police detained 28 people after a group of neo-Nazis attacked an anti-Nazism rally in Stockholm by hurling bottles, torches and firecrackers. Two people were hospitalized and a cop was injured in the back after being hit by a heavy object, police spokesman Sven-Erik Olsson said. Olsson said around 200 people participated in the rally when they were attacked by a group of about 40. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Sheriff: Colorado school gunman threatened teacher in September

Arapahoe High School.
Teen shooter may have been nursing a grudge leading up to attack

Investigators believe the gunman who entered Arapahoe High School in Centennial, Colorado, on Friday was looking for a teacher with whom he had a dispute.

Karl Pierson, 18, may have been nursing a grudge against the teacher — a librarian and head of the school debate team — since September. Pierson was on the team and had been disciplined by the librarian for reasons yet to be disclosed, County Sheriff Grayson Robinson said. He said Pierson had threatened the teacher in September.

Pierson fired six shots from a pump-action shotgun between the moment he walked into Arapahoe High School and the moment he killed himself in a library as a school security officer closed in on him, Robinson said.

Sean Sweeney, a runner who lives near Arapahoe High School in Centennial, Colo., pauses to say a prayer for the victims and the gunman of a shooting at the school during his early morning run on Saturday. DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Arapahoe senior Claire Davis, 17, who was sitting with a friend when Pierson entered the library, was shot in the head. She remained hospitalized in critical condition Sunday.

Robinson has said investigators think Davis was shot at random by Pierson.

Pierson legally bought a shotgun on Dec. 6 at a local store, and he purchased ammunition the morning of the shootings. Anyone 18 and older is allowed to buy a shotgun in Colorado; only those over 21 can legally buy a handgun.

Pierson arrived at the school toting the shotgun and wearing the ammunition on his body. In a backpack he carried three Molotov cocktails.

Pierson managed to ignite one Molotov cocktail inside the school library before he killed himself as a fast-acting school security officer, a deputy sheriff, closed in, Robinson said.

Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper noted Sunday that Pierson was not a loner but cautioned that the investigation was in its early stages. "He didn't seem to have a mental illness," the governor said. "He had a lot of friends, he was outspoken. But again, there's no rhyme or reason. We can't — there's nothing that says, 'Ah, now I understand.'"

Pierson's attack lasted just 80 seconds but reopened scars in a community traumatized by mass shootings in nearby Denver suburbs — at Columbine High School in 1999 and an Aurora movie complex in 2012. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Post-Columbine

Security procedures hailed by Gov.

Colorado's governor credited security procedures adopted after the 1999 massacre at Columbine High School for helping to put a quick end to Friday's shooting attack.

Gov. John Hickenlooper said that there are "strategies and protocols in place, where we had a deputy sheriff in the building who immediately ran towards the trouble."

Arapahoe High officials also instituted a lockdown, with teachers and students hiding in closets and locking doors. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ticketing scheme could save police cash

A demonstrator smokes a joint on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on April 20, 2010. Police would have the option of ticketing people for some minor offences under a new plan. PAWEL DWULIT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Proposal. Officers could ticket people for offences such as trespassing, nudity

Police would have the option of ticketing people for a range of minor offences — instead of laying criminal charges — under a plan that could yield significant savings for the cash-strapped justice system.

Timothy Smith, a spokesman for the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, says the idea has emerged from discussions fostered by the federal government on curbing rising policing costs.

Under the proposal, officers would have the option of ticketing people for offences such as causing a disturbance, public nudity, falsifying an employment record, soliciting prostitution, vagrancy or trespassing.

It builds on a resolution the Chiefs of Police passed last August that would give forces the discretion to issue a ticket under the Contraventions Act for possession of a small amount of cannabis.

Last January, the federal Public Safety minister hosted a summit on the economics of policing that included officers and chiefs from across the country, government officials and academics. Officials say the cost of policing is steadily rising — hitting more than $12 billion in 2010 — even though the crime rate is falling.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

WikiLeaks. Thirteen federal agencies had contracts with U.S. firm

At least 13 Canadian government agencies have had subscriptions with U.S. private intelligence firm Strategic Forecasting, Inc. or Stratfor, sometimes dubbed a shadow CIA, newly released WikiLeaks emails indicate.

Stratfor came under fire recently after a leaked company document prepared for an oil company outlined ways to counter activist groups, such as Greenpeace, who oppose Canada's oilsands development.

The same cache of leaked emails indicates Canadian federal agencies have purchased at least half a million dollars in Stratfor services.

Emails from January 2009 and February 2011 show invoices of $13,125 and $13,725 for one-year Stratfor subscriptions for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, which were not publicly disclosed by the department.

Under proactive disclosure policy, Canadian government contracts worth more than $10,000 must be posted on the web.

Foreign Affairs spokesperson Jean-Bruno Villeneuve says there was a clerical error in not reporting the contracts.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

The home page of the Stratfor website is seen on a computer monitor in January 2012. CASSANDRA VINOGRAD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Venezuela

Bomb threat grounds Air France flight

A Paris-bound flight was rescheduled for Sunday after Venezuela grounded an Air France plane that French intelligence authorities said terrorists might have been planning to blow up. Venezuela's intelligence agency declined to comment on the threat, saying it isn't authorized to discuss the case.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Florida

Teen charged with kidnapping

A 17-year-old faces kidnapping and carjacking charges after authorities say he stole a car with a baby inside. Daytona Beach police said their detectives spotted two stolen vehicles driving together on Friday. One had recently been stolen from a car dealership. The car stopped at a gas station where three men jumped out and took off. The baby was not injured.

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UN prediction

Global e-waste to rise 30% by 2017

The mountain of refrigerators, cellphones, TV sets and other electrical waste disposed of annually worldwide is forecast to grow by a third by 2017, according to a UN study released Sunday.

E-waste — defined as anything with a battery or a cord — can pose a big problem because it often contains substances that are harmful to humans and the environment if not properly treated. On the other hand, some of it can be profitably recycled.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Canada Goose spreads wings, migrates overseas

Status symbol. The Toronto-based parka company is flying high, aims to soar to new heights worldwide

Dani Reiss, president and CEO of Canada Goose Inc., in his office. THE CANADIAN PRESS

The head of Canada Goose is setting his sights on India and other parts of Asia as he looks beyond cold weather for future growth in the jacket business.

Dani Reiss concedes that stocking shelves in warm climates might seem unusual, but he says it makes sense for the company's high-end outerwear, which has become a fashion statement as well as a way to stay warm.

"Cold is relative. Tokyo is our best market in Asia and it never goes below zero," the chief executive said in an interview at the company's headquarters in midtown Toronto.

"Just like someone in Toronto buys a Range Rover, someone in Tokyo buys a Canada Goose jacket."

Canada Goose is at a turning point.

Take a glimpse of any city street this time of year and you'll likely see Canadians wrapped in the jackets emblazoned with the company's trademark badge on the sleeve and a fur-trimmed hood. Reiss wants to boost the company's reputation beyond Canada where it sometimes seems like the jackets couldn't get any more popular.

Last week, Canada Goose struck a deal with Bain Capital that gives the U.S. private investment firm a majority stake in the brand and promises the kind of financial support that will help it push into new markets. Reiss will maintain what he calls a "significant minority position."

"They'll consider expanding the brand beyond just coats," said David Detomasi, assistant professor of international business at Queen's University.

Think Canada Goose watches, sports equipment or even down duvets that are marketed as the warmest bedding in the world.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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POSTMAN'S DOG DAYS ARE OVER

URBAN COMPASS

Paul Sullivan
vancouver@metronews.ca

The postman rings no more.

It's either the beginning of a really bad movie script or the future.

Canada Post says it will end door-to-door home delivery within the next five years. And to make it all more palatable, it's raising the price of a postage stamp.

It takes a lot of brass to cut service and raise prices at the same time, but your postal service is up to the task.

Clearly, this has been coming for a while. Canada Post has already eliminated door-to-door service in new subdivisions and more Canadians live in apartments and condos which have never had door-to-door service.

It's a sign of the times. The neighbourhood route-walking letter carrier now takes his or her place in the Graveyard of Golden Goodies along with doctors who make house calls.

This will come as good news to people with dogs. I've had three dogs in my career as a homeowner and they were all driven insane by the sight of a letter carrier in uniform.

I'm not sure if it was a canine aversion to junk mail or the fact that there was never any mail for them. Who knows the mind of a dog?

It's also a boon to lazy people who don't like to shovel snow and put down salt on the front steps. You actually have to work pretty hard to attract mail delivery in the winter time, and considering the junk mail and the bills, it's not a bad idea to just let the snow pile up.

Anyway, interaction with Canada Post will be a thing of the past and we'll all get our mail from multiple address post boxes: practical, efficient, impersonal.

I, for one will miss the postie. That regular, friendly presence helps foster a sense of neighbourhood at a time when community is often defined as the number of Facebook likes or Twitter followers you can attract.

The sentinel of the sidewalk will be replaced by someone in a right-hand drive truck with a long key chain and a bag. Not the same.

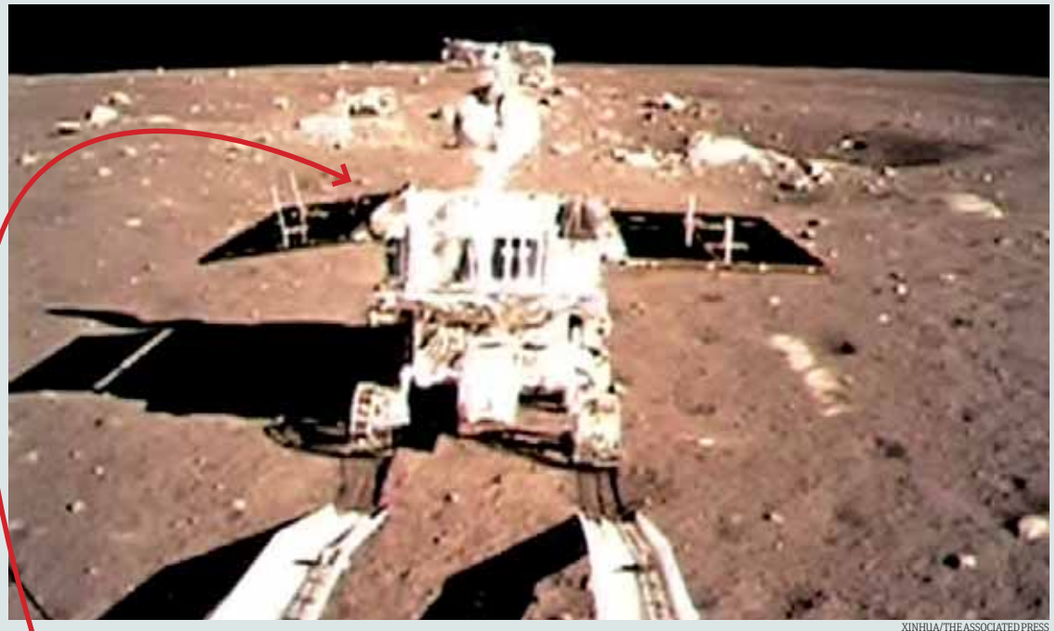
And clearly, the people who will no longer get door-to-door postal delivery are the only ones who actually need it: people who can't figure out their email or text messaging functions.

As for the rest of us, rest assured that UPS, FedEx, DHL, etc. will continue to find us and leave sticky notes all over the door instructing us to launch a quest for our packages that will take us to the outer reaches of the galaxy where some bored, gum-chewing teenager will demand to see our ID before advising us that they have no package resembling that description.

And no, they don't have stamps either.

ZOOM

China makes its first moon landing



XINHUA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rover, lander snap pics of each other

In this image taken by the on-board camera of the lunar probe Chang'e-3 and made off the screen of the Beijing Aerospace Control Center in Beijing, China's first moon rover Jade Rabbit touches the lunar surface Sunday.

State broadcaster China Central Television showed images taken from the lander's camera of the rover and its shadow moving down a sloping ladder and touching the surface, setting off applause in the Beijing control centre.

China has completed the world's first soft landing of a space probe on the moon in nearly four decades.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The mission

- The six-wheeled rover will survey the moon's geological structure and surface and look for natural resources for three months, while the lander will carry out scientific explorations at the landing site for one year.
- The mission marks the next stage in an ambitious space program that aims to eventually put a Chinese astronaut on the moon. China's space program is an enormous source of pride for the country, the third to carry out a lunar soft landing — which does not damage the craft and the equipment it carries.

Clickbait

"We are looking for highly intelligent individuals. To find them, we have devised a test."

Thus began a simple message, written in white text against a black background, signed "3301" and uploaded to a 4chan message board in 2012, kicking off a cryptic Internet mystery known as Cicada 3301.

Consisting of images and encoded messages designed to challenge the most cryptically-minded, the mystery that began with that simple message is a sprawling labyrinth that winds through math, poetry, ancient runes and steampunk, eventually leading those taking up the challenge to real locations across the world, where posters and QR codes are the cache.

Eventually, the ace brains who have cracked the code and overcome obstacles like message boards and forums purposefully seeded with misinformation find themselves in what's known as The Onion Router — a "dark Internet" of sites that are not indexed by search engines.

The puzzles and messages become private and those who got close to the prize are left to wonder what they were participating in.

So what is it all about? Speculation has it that the NSA, CIA or some other government agency is using the teasers to recruit new operatives.

Or perhaps it's a private endeavour looking for cryptology candidates to staff their operations.

Whoever is behind it, only a very select few have been able to learn. And they've been remarkably tight-lipped once the puzzles go private.

The first Cicada puzzle emerged on Jan. 4, 2012. A second was released to the web on the same date in 2013.

Will there be a third iteration? That's just as big a mystery.

To learn more about Cicada 3301, check uncovering-cicada.wikia.com.

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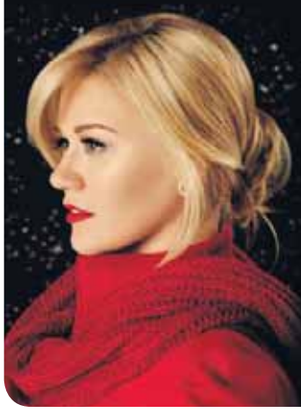

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Can you spot the real 12 Days of Christmas verse among these mondegreens? ISTOCK

And a paltry tin-affair tree!

Say what? Do you really know what you're singing when it comes to Christmas carol lyrics?

Milk and spiders? Nine lazy Hansons? Sleep in heavenly peas?

It's that time of year: holiday music time. And with holiday music comes all the strange and twisted things we sometimes think we're hearing.

Mondegreens, the moniker for misheard words in song, aren't restricted to holiday standards, of course, but the old-timey language of some seems to serve as a botched-lyric magnet.

Lest you think funny turns on song lyrics are the stuff of childhoods, Missy O'Reilly knows otherwise. She's an actress, comedian and co-owner of Planet Rose, a karaoke haven on Manhattan's Lower East Side. "I'm the biggest Christmas nerd, so I'm always encouraging people to sing Christmas music," she said. "Some people are really surprised when they see what the real words are."

Look no further than Snopes.com for handy examples submitted by readers of the website that collects and debunks urban legends, folklore, myths, rumours and misinformation. Noting that mondegreens aren't parody, but words we actually think we're listening to, Snopes keeps a list of holiday gems.

For The Twelve Days of Christmas, there's "ten lawyers leaving" and "nine lazy Hansons." Later we've got "six geezers laying," along with "a paltry tin-affair tree." Those are in lieu of lords a-leaping, ladies dancing, geese a-laying and the obligatory partridge in a pear tree, FYI.

What's in a word?

What's a mondegreen? According to Grant Barrett, co-host of the public radio show A Way With Words, the word mondegreen can be traced to Sylvia Wright and a column she wrote in Harper's Magazine in 1954 titled The Death of Lady Mondegreen. Wright discovered that for years she had botched the last line of the first stanza of the Scottish folk ballad The Bonnie Earl o'Moray. How it goes, with spellings based on updates of antiquated English: "They have slain the Earl of Moray, and laid him on the green." What she heard: "They have slain the Earl of Moray, and Lady Mondegreen."

If ever you've made it to the fourth verse of Winter Wonderland, you'll be relieved to know it doesn't include "Later on milk and spiders, as we dream by the fire," but rather: "Later on we'll conspire ..."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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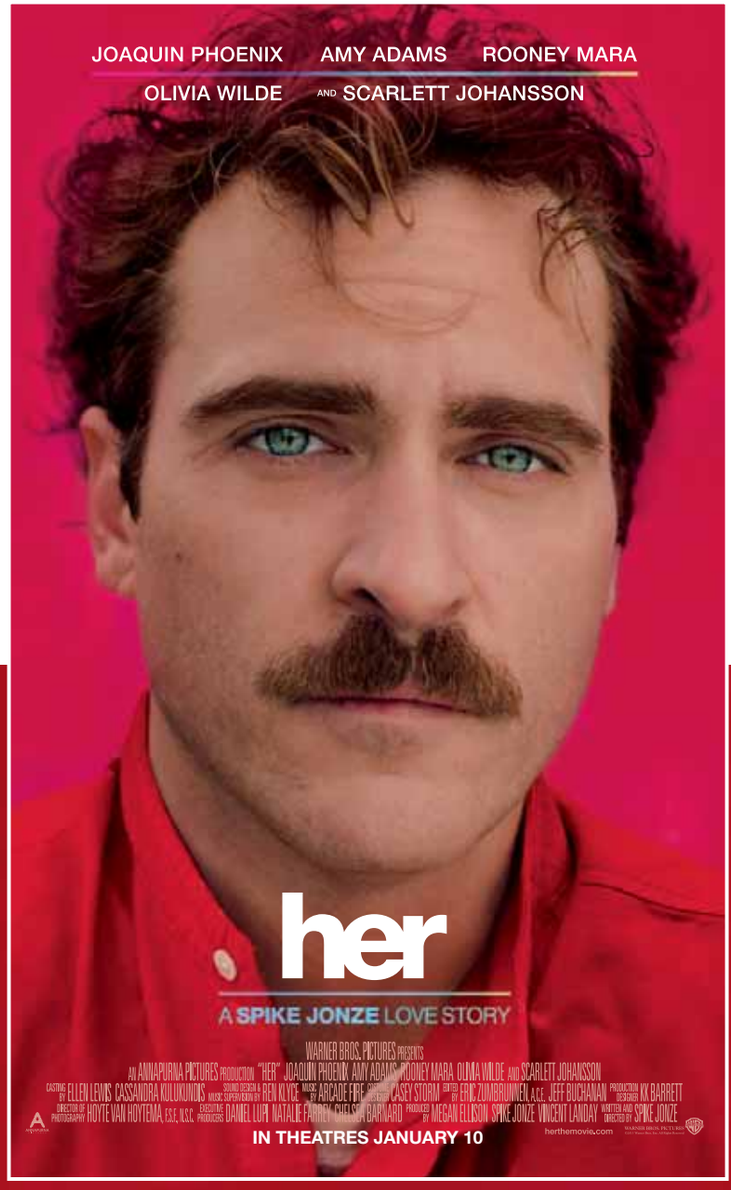
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No purchase necessary. Contest open to residents of Canada, excluding Quebec, who have reached the age of majority (18) years of age or older. Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received. Twenty (20) Prizes are available to be won, consisting of two tickets to see an advance screening of 'Her' (approximate retail value $26). Skill testing question required. Contest closes December 22, 2013 at 11.59PM (EST). To enter and for complete contest rules visit www.clubmetro.com

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Britney Spears wants to ruin yet another life

STARGAZING
Malene Arpe
scene@metronews.ca

Britney Spears says she really wants to have a baby girl, a "mini-me," so she won't feel as alone in the world anymore. She did, however, also say that it's not just that she's selfish or anything and that having a baby is also "a good excuse to buy Skittles."

Scandal's Season 3 has been shortened due to Kerry Washington's preg-

nancy. And they couldn't just give us four episodes of Cyrus and Mellie scheming while pretending Olivia got caught by B-613? #dearthofgoodideas #bitterbitterfan.

At this year's Jingle Ball Miley Cyrus twerked with Santa Claus and Selena Gomez cursed and angrily walked off stage. Sadly, Justin Bieber and his No-pants Elf Dancers couldn't make it.

After all the bad reviews of her performance in The Sound of Music Live!, Carrie Underwood tweeted, "Plain and simple: Mean people need Jesus...." Said Jesus, "Well sure, but you must remember, Carrie, that critique does not equal meanness. Also, that rust-coloured dress sure didn't do you any favours."

MTV names Miley Cyrus Artist of the Year. We're so very, very sorry, Franz von Schneiderlick. You will just have to continue making your impressionist straw tableaux in obscurity.

You could WIN passes to see 47 RONIN

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Travel Tidbit

Ain't it grand?

IT'S ALL RELATIVE
Kathy Buckworth
Kathybuckworth.com

Entertaining the kids in the car, plane or train on the way to grandma's house is a challenge. But parents are often left scrambling to find something for the kids to do once there. You don't want to drag along the whole toy room, but find some space to pack items to keep the kids busy.

Building blocks, like Lego, are terrific as the kids can continually create new things. Buy the bucket of blocks versus the kits. The kits tend to have an "all finished" sense once completed, whereas the "free building" can go on forever.

Stop by the dollar store and pick up basic arts and crafts supplies. Non-permanent markers and construction paper are great for making decorations.

A deck of cards and a popular board game can fill hours of time.

Download movies or TV shows that the kids love on your own laptop or tablet, if you're unsure what TV channels or internet access the grandparents have. Rogers' new Kids Zone portal has many pre-selected loved shows from channels you trust. You can set up a playlist so you know exactly what they're watching. Grand times. KATHY BUCKWORTH IS THE AUTHOR OF I AM SO THE BOSS OF YOU.

Exclusively online

Read the latest Metro content from Lyranda Martin Evans and Fiona Stevenson, authors of the hilarious, best-selling book Reasons Mommy Drinks, at metronews.ca/voices.

Cookies, gifts and...meditation?

Q&A. The big man in red is exceptionally busy around this time of year, what with toy-making and list-checking — but he did find a few minutes to chat with us

Santa says oatmeal raisin cookies are great but he'll skip the eggnog. ISTOCK

Greetings, Santa! We're so grateful to speak with you, considering how hectic your schedule must be right now.
It's the most wonderful time of the year! And it is busy, but it is always a delight to talk to you.

How do you manage your time?
That's one of the most difficult things about the job — that it does take a lot of time and energy, focus, concentration, meditation and prayers.

Santa meditates?
Of course — everyone should have meditation. It's the moments of thinking of nothing that so many wonderful joyous things come. It's kind of a gift that I give to myself as Santa, that I'm able to take a moment and turn the lights down and light my magical candle and think.

We bet Mrs. Claus loves to see you in a relaxed state.
Even at this time of year, Mrs. Claus and the elves are extremely busy. They're keeping up with me, being sure that I have my food, my time, and keeping the list on who's naughty and nice...

Say, what kinds of cookies should we leave out for you on Christmas Eve?
I'm trying to lean toward oatmeal and raisin — it's a little healthier for me. I'm trying to watch my weight. Otherwise, how could I ever get down all those chimneys? And I would suggest carrots for the reindeer, although they are leaning heavily toward candy corn. [And] skim milk all the way! (Laughs)

Should we leave you some eggnog too?
I'll be driving so I'll have to pass.

You've likely got lots of people to visit. How many letters do you think you'll receive this year?
Millions. I'm already getting letters from children who tell me what they want. And some of the most wonderful letters include the whole family — my brother wants this, my mom, my dad [want this]. Even if you're on the naughty list, you have a little bit of time left.

So how can someone on the naughty list end up on the nice list?
By being nice. If you're a child, by being respectful and obedient. If you're an adult, by helping someone, by being nice. It's very important.

We want to know how you spend your time when you're not working. For example, how do you spend your summers?
I enjoy fishing. We have some wonderful fishing up in the North Pole toward southern Alaska.

And what do you do the day after Christmas?
I'll go back to the North Pole, collect the elves and the reindeer and we'll settle down for a nice, long winter's nap. [Then we start working again] as soon as I wake up. When you love what you do, you never have to worry about working because it's a joy. We start to think about the toys for next year.
METRO

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Cherry-White Chocolate Drop Cookies: Beat the baking guilt

This recipe makes two dozen cookies. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

At this time of year, we are constantly reminded that happy families are supposed to have special bonding moments while baking luscious holiday treats. If we really loved our children, we'd be delighted by the mess they make while dumping flour on the floor and spilling raw eggs down the side of the stove.

And so begins the guilt. Not only are we supposed to be baking, we're also supposed to be enjoying it.

To attempt to assuage the guilt, try these one-bowl cookies.

1. Heat the oven to 375 F. Line 2 baking sheets with kitchen parchment.

2. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat the butter and both sugars until fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the egg, almond extract and milk, then mix well. Add the flour and baking soda, then mix just until the dry ingredients are well mixed in. Mix in the cherries, cranberries and chocolate chips.

3. Drop the dough in 2-tablespoon mounds on the prepared baking sheets, leaving 2 inches between them. Bake, in batches if necessary, for 12 to 14 minutes, or until just lightly browned at the edges and still slightly soft at the centre. Leave on the baking sheet for 2 minutes, then use a spatula to transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ingredients

- 2 sticks (1 cup) butter, softened
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp almond extract
- 1/4 cup milk
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 cup dried cherries
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup white chocolate chips

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Should we bring teaching to the electronic tablet?

School on a screen.
One in three kids using iPads in class admit to playing games: Canadian study

Will iPads be the next school desk staple? ISTOCK

A third of Quebec students surveyed about using iPads in class admitted to playing games during school hours and an astounding 99 per cent said they found the gadgets distracting, suggests a new study based on the experiences of more than 6,000 tablet-toting kids.

But even though just a few students said they felt a tablet helped them learn better, the report's co-authors still concluded that schools should invest in the technology, although cautiously.

Researchers surveyed 6,057 students, who were enrolled in Grades 6 through 10, and 302 teachers about their experiences so far in using tablets daily in the classroom.

The report concludes that outfitting large numbers of students with costly tablets is a worthwhile endeavour, provided that teachers are well prepared and trained for the radical shift in delivering their lesson plans.

"It would appear that incorporating the iPad into education constitutes a necessary risk for schools, and that this technological tool has breathtaking cognitive potential," states the report.

But co-author Thierry Karsenti noted that so far, teachers have generally not been well prepared to teach with tablets.

The report notes that 70 per cent of the teachers surveyed said they had "never or very rarely" used an iPad before they were introduced into their classrooms, versus 53.6 per cent of their students.

"Some of the teachers were getting the iPad on the first day of school with their students, can you imagine? All the students were on Facebook, Twitter and the teachers were like, 'Oh my God, this is not working,' and blaming the technology because he or she was not ready," said Karsenti, the Canada research chair for information and communication technologies in education.

"You have teachers who are fully unaware of what's going on in the classroom, they're sitting reading their notes and the students are doing whatever they want."

The report notes that a "surprising" number of students — more than one in three — admitted to playing games in class, sometimes with their teachers' permission after an assignment or task was completed.

Researchers were also surprised that, in some ways, the tablet technology wasn't been used to its full potential. Students said they did relatively little reading on their tablets and were still using paper textbooks, while many assignments were still be submitted on paper rather than electronically.

About 85 per cent of the students said they never or rarely used the iPad to prepare written work.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

iPositives

- When teachers were asked about the benefits of using iPads in class, about half said it opened up better access to information, 40 per cent cited the easy portability of the devices, and about a third said it allowed for greater collaboration.

'Round the world wisdom

The straightest path may not be the fastest

The severe market crash in October 2008 changed my life. I started running to regain my health, both emotional and physical. Shortly after I took my first steps, I ran the Gobi March in China in June '09, followed by the Atacama Crossing in Chile in '10 and the Sahara Race in Egypt in '11. In this post, I share a lesson about life, learned from the desert.

LESSONS FROM THE DESERT
Stéfan Danis
life@metronews.ca

The simplest path between two points is a straight line. While mathematically true, in life this is rarely the case. Up and downs, twists and turns, that's the norm we all know. In desert running, where you'd think the shortest path would be the one most advantageous, often times it isn't. In running, as in life, while one path may seem harder, longer or more difficult, it may be the one that pays the most rewards.

When facing the Sahara Desert I was advised to carefully pick my running lines and avoid simply darting ahead. The desert course we ran had signal flags roughly every 100m, so that racers knew the specific direction to be followed. Unlike the rocky desert terrain of the Gobi or the Atacama deserts where I had excelled, the Sahara's sand was soft and its dunes windswept daily.

Now, instead of running the shortest distance, I would now be scanning to calculate my path of least resistance: Which side of the sand dune was wind packed? Which side was sun-baked with firm, vein-like grooves? Where might there be rock sediments I could run on with a hardened surface? I ran a longer route and was a degree off course for most of the race, but it paved a swift arrival to the finish line.

Have you looked at all the alternative paths to overcome your challenges?

STÉFAN DANIS IS THE CEO OF NEXCAREER AND MANDRAKE, AND THE AUTHOR OF GOBI RUNNER

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Zack Kassian and David Booth celebrate Booth's second-period goal during the Canucks' 6-2 win over the Boston Bruins on Saturday night at Rogers Arena.
DEREK LEUNG/GETTY IMAGES

Canucks sharing load during win streak

NHL. Vancouver has six different goal scorers in win over Boston

CAM TUCKER
cam.tucker@metronews.ca

It was a sight to behold.

David Booth, whose struggles to find his game during his three seasons in Vancouver have been well documented, flying down the left wing then wiring a wicked wrist shot past Boston Bruins goalie Tuukka Rask with authority to the back of the net.

For Booth, who has a cap hit of $4.25 million, it was the fourth goal of the season.

A little redemption for Booth, too. He's been dogged by injuries, looked invisible at times, been sent down to the minors and is now working with a power-skating instructor.

"David's been knocking on the door. He's been doing all the things we've asked of him," said head coach John Tortorella.

The Canucks got goals from six different players in their 6-2 pasting of the Bruins before a charged up crowd at Rogers Arena Saturday.

Besides Booth, two defencemen — Chris Tanev and summer free-agent signing Yannick Weber — scored, as did forwards Jannik Hansen, Chris Higgins and Henrik Sedin.

It was another example of the well-rounded attack the Canucks have gotten throughout this now-concluded five-game homestand.

As a result, the Canucks went a perfect 5-0 on home ice this time around, and have now won seven straight to begin the month of December.

They've allowed only eight goals over that span.

"It feels good, the way we're playing," said Sedin, the Canucks' captain.

"We play tight defensively. We don't really care who scores goals … and it seems like a lot of guys are chipping in."

The Canucks are now on the road for their next three games — all against Central Division teams.

The trip starts Tuesday against the Minnesota Wild, then continues to Dallas against the Stars on Thursday and wraps up Friday against the Chicago Blackhawks, the NHL's top team.

MLS

Whitecaps set to make Robinson decision official

The Vancouver Whitecaps will begin the week by naming a new head coach.

The Whitecaps are set to name Carl Robinson as the club's next head coach at a press conference Monday morning.

Robinson spent the last two years as an assistant coach under Martin Rennie, the club's former manager who was fired at the end of October.

Before he joined the coaching fraternity, Robinson played in both MLS, with the New York Red Bulls and Toronto FC, and in the English Premier League.

Robinson received praise from current members of the club, including Canadian Russell Teibert and the MLS leading scorer Camilo Sanvezzo, for how he works with players.

The announcement comes after a long process to fill the vacant position.

The club was unsuccessful in its attempts to land Jason Kreis, former coach of Real Salt Lake and now the new coach with the expansion franchise New York City FC, and Bob Bradley.
METRO

Carl Robinson with the New York Red Bulls in April 2010.
GETTY IMAGES

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Family and financial problems can easily be resolved over the next seven days, but you must not keep putting them off.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Speak up if you have something important to say but make sure you listen too because the feedback you get could be invaluable.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You may have to bluff your way through the sort of situation you would usually cope with quite easily today.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
As some of your views are a bit controversial there could be some interesting skirmishes today. But don't make a scene if someone who disagrees with you challenges your grasp of the facts.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Others may be having second thoughts about what you are doing but you have no such doubts. Even if you do make a mistake or two along the way your momentum and sense of purpose will keep you moving towards your goal.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Your confidence is sky-high at the moment and because of that you are ready to risk almost anything to prove you are the best. Before the day is over even your critics will be singing your praises and willing you to succeed.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You will get your way on the work front easily enough today but you may upset a few people along the way. That won't worry you in the slightest.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You will be rather outspoken today, which is not that unusual, but make sure your criticisms are justified or you could make enemies of people who should be your friends.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Mercury combined with your ruler Jupiter warns that what others tell you and what they believe may be two completely different things.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You don't lack for ideas at the moment but you seem strangely reluctant to let the world know about them. Maybe that's not such a bad thing.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
The answers you seek are not that hard to find but you will surely find them quicker today if you get some assistance. And don't make things too complicated for yourself.

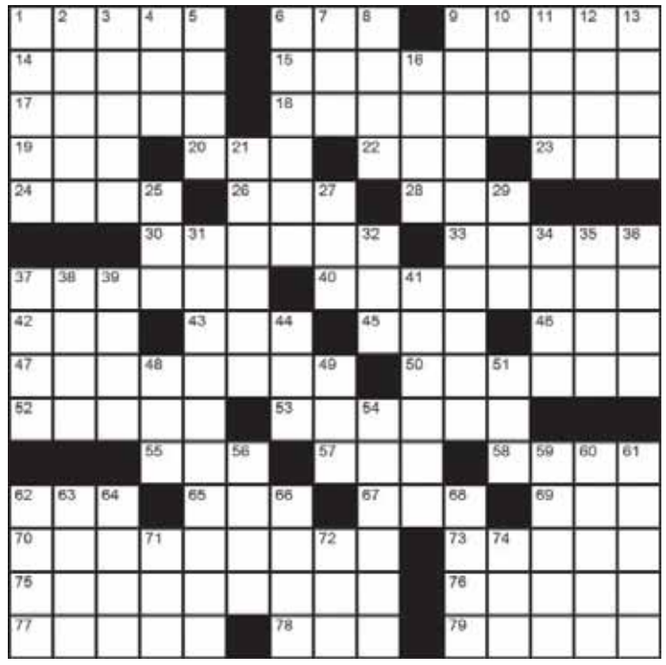
♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You must check facts and figures carefully today as Mercury linked to retrograde Jupiter warns that either someone is trying to deceive you or you will in some way deceive yourself.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



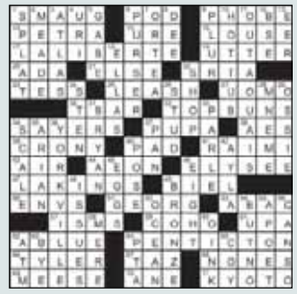
Across

1. Anna Paquin movie, "The __" (1993)
6. Ms. Gardner
9. Impudent
14. Christmas Tree topper
15. Anti-aging cream targets: 2 wds.
17. NWT: __ Heritage Trail
18. Canada Dry __ __
19. Farm animal
20. Sports fig.
22. "__ _ Married an Axe Murderer" (1993)
23. Li'l water channel
24. Sun., on Mon.
26. Mr. Kilmer
28. Mil. rank
30. Festive beverage
33. Wuthering Heights growth
37. Chachi's surname
40. Author who co-founded the Writers' Trust of Canada in 1976, Margaret __ (b.1926 - d.1987)
42. "Yahoo!"
43. Ms. Thurman
45. Li'l pressure unit
46. Ceiling
47. Fun street in downtown Montreal
50. Pre-Christmas time
52. Mr. Spock's father
53. Formal order
55. Clairvoyance, e.g.
57. Total
58. Yielded
62. "Law & Order: _ _ _"
65. Rum __ Tugger (Cats character)
67. Cereal grass
69. Farm call
70. Popular posting-up stuff website
73. Do computer cleaning
75. Merchants
76. On _ __ (Doing well)
77. __ statement
78. Home reno network
79. Paint finish kind

Down

1. Joshua Jackson's "Dawson's Creek" role
2. Floored: 2 wds.
3. Ms. Moorehead
4. Paleo opposite
5. Stewing pot
6. Blanket type
7. Ancient 7
8. Ms. Jillian's
9. Wintertime fun: 2 wds.
10. "__ Bud" (1997)
11. Actress Ms. Merkel's
12. Boston basket-baller, briefly
13. River of Flanders
16. "__ & Icons" (Vintage show from MuchMusic)
21. "Let's Make a Deal" = _ _ __ show
25. Racecar driver Mr. Fabi
27. Miley Cyrus movie
29. Casual shirt
31. Well-known from daytime TV, Canadian designer Brian who has a home furnishings line
32. Discontinuity
34. 'Appear' suffix
35. _-__ Highway
36. It means 'Seven'
37. Bows
38. Uncommon, to Caesar
39. Alicia's role in "Clueless" (1995)
41. Elvis became a Private in it in '58: 2 wds.
44. Moreover
48. Check
49. Some football positions, e.g.
51. Non-carnivore, e.g.
54. Respectful gesture when meeting The Queen
56. Knit one __ two...
59. Monastery boss
60. Cat burglar's target
61. Bird of Jove
62. Li'l season [pl.]
63. Opinion
64. Do __ others...
66. Olde-style reward
68. Wax-coated cheese
71. Asphalt
72. __ Lanka
74. Big time

Friday's Crossword

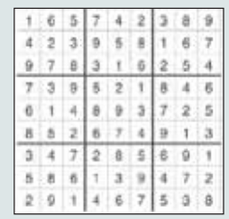


Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

	2				9			
9			3	2		4	6	
4		8					2	
	9	3		8				
			1		5			
				6		5	9	
	7					2		3
	3	2		7	1			4
			8				1	

Friday's Sudoku



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